

WILLIAMS, MARY PEARL HALL (1928~) Mary Pearl Hall Williams was born in Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas to Marvin and Theo Mae Hall. Marvin Hall, an attorney, moved to Austin with his family in 1937 when Governor James V. Allred named him State Insurance Commissioner. Mary Pearl graduated from Austin High School in 1944 and matriculated to the University of Texas. While at UT, she studied law and met her future husband, Jerre S. Williams, who also happened to be one of her law professors. Mary Pearl and Jerre Williams began courting once she received her law degree in 1949. The two married the next year.

The two moved across the United States following Mr. Williams career. During this period, Mary Pearl worked as a model in New York and a labor arbitrator and civil rights officer in Washington, D. C. After many years, the Williams finally made it back to Texas and began making a life for themselves in Austin. In 1964, Williams was asked to temporarily fill in for an overworked Municipal Court judge and found her true calling.

Following her two-week term, Williams lobbied county commissioners to appoint her to the vacant County Court-at-Law No. 2. In 1973, she was sworn in as Travis County's first female judge. In 1980, Williams was elected judge of the 53rd District Court. Handling her docket with the same fair-mindedness, Williams went on to serve twenty-one years in the 53rd Court. During her tenure, Williams lost her husband, Jerre, who was serving on the 5th U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals, to lung cancer. After a 27-year judicial career and never having an opponent, Williams stepped down on Tuesday, January 2, 2001. Williams plans on spending her retirement with her grandchildren and traveling.

Information taken from Austin American-Statesman article by Andrea Ball on Tuesday, January 2, 2001.